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ABSTRACT

Noting that Hodding Carter, Jr., editor and majority owner of the Greenville, Mississippi, "Delta Democrat-Times," was considered a spokesman of and to the South regarding racial matters during the two decades between the end of World War II and the escalation of the Vietnam war, this monograph examines Carter's newspaper in the two-year period immediately following the 1954 Supreme Court desegretation decision. The monograph's purpose is to examine the issues chosen and the persuasive techniques used in Carter's writings, to consider his personality and background, and to analyze the writings in the light of accepted criteria of journalistic performance. The monograph concludes by noting that Carter was able to meet the criteria for responsible journalism not so much through conscious effort as by meeting the following qualifications of an effective editor: ownership of the medium, active participation as a citizen in the community, respect in the wider journalistic community, the ability to write lucidly, and the capacity for formulating independent views and the desire to express them. (HOD)

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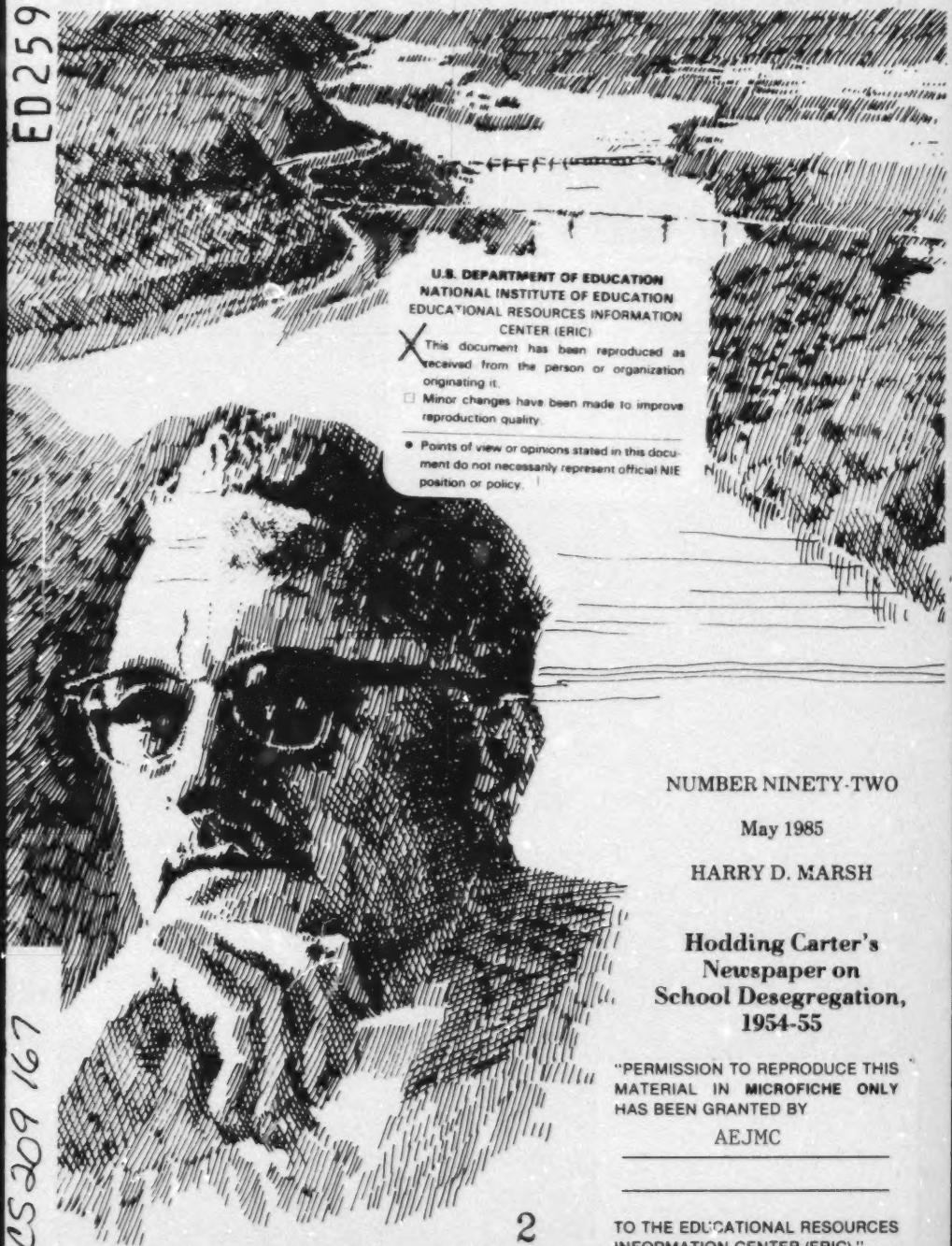

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May 1985

HARRY D. MARSH

Hodding Carter's Newspaper on School Desegregation, 1954-55

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HARRY D. MARSH

Hodding Carter's Newspaper On School Desegregation, 1954-1955

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Accepted for Publication February 1985

HARRY D. MARSH is a Professor of Journalism and Mass Communications at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin and has held staff positions on nine newspapers, including the editorial page staff of the *New York Herald Tribune*. He worked for the *Delta Democrat-Times* in Greenville, Mississippi, from January 1954 to September 1960.

BETWEEN THE END of World War II and the escalation of the Vietnam War, the political and legal status of black people in the South underwent a change almost as dramatic as the abolition of slavery a century before. Negroes gained legal access to previously segregated public institutions and accommodations, and they began to vote in large numbers and to be elected to office.

During these two decades, Hodding Carter Jr., editor and majority owner of the *Delta Democrat-Times* of Greenville, Mississippi, was a spokesman of and to the South regarding racial matters. Upon his death in 1972, the New York *Times* began Carter's obituary by describing him as "the outspoken publisher and editor who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1946 for his editorials against racial segregation in the South. . . "[1] As recently as 1982, Carter's role was described by Robert C. Maynard, editor and publisher of the Oakland *Tribune* and a black. In the fifth Ralph McGill lecture, which honors the late editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*, Maynard said, "the role of Ralph McGill, Hodding Carter and a myriad other courageous literary leaders of the region in that time was to try to awaken a people from their fantasy to face the reality that the past was never to return. . . "[2] A segregationist columnist during the height of the Little Rock Central High School desegregation crisis in the late 1950s attempted to deride Carter's reputation when he wrote that Carter was the "the Ralph McGill of Mississippi" and that *Arkansas Gazette* editor Harry Ashmore was "the Ralph McGill of Little Rock." From time to time thereafter Carter would recall with a laugh, "I wrote Harry that I was

better than he was; I was the Ralph McGill of a whole state; he was just the Ralph McGill of a city."[3]

By praise and criticism, Carter's writings have been acknowledged at their publication and to this day as leading social commentary at a critical time and place. They merit examination and analysis. His books and magazine articles, through which his reputation was established as a spokesman *of* the South, are widely available.[4] With a few exceptions, the editorials in his newspaper were read only by its subscibers, yet they are the preponderance of his record as a spokesman *to* Southerners. This study concerns itself with this role and these narrowly distributed writings.

Methodology and Criteria

The goal of this monograph is to establish the social, political and economic background for editorials in Carter's newspaper in the two-year period immediately following the 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision, to examine the issues chosen and the persuasive techniques used in the writings themselves, to consider the personality and background of the editor and to analyze the writings in the light of accepted criteria of journalistic performance.

The year after Carter received the Pulitzer Prize, a landmark study on press responsibility appeared which provides appropriate criteria for examining the writings. The Commission on Freedom of the Press published its report, *A Free and Responsible Press,*[5] which helped establish social responsibility as a central concept in discourse on American mass media ethics.[6] In essence, the Commission found that unbridled freedom of the press did not meet the needs of contemporary society.[7] It set out five criteria for establishing responsibility. The criteria:

1. A truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning;
2. A forum for the exchange of comment and criticism;
3. A means of projecting the opinions and attitudes of the society to one another;
4. A method of presenting and clarifying the goals and values of the society;
5. A way of reaching every member of the society by the currents of information, thought and feeling which the press supplies.[8]

For more than a century, editorials have been the traditional voice of the newspaper and its editor. Editors have used them to air their own biases and for selfish purposes; frequently through editorials, however, editors have given voice to the conscience and good sense of society. In this latter function, editors have had an opportunity to address the kinds of things spelled out in the Commission's criteria. Editorials are ap-

propriate tools for striving to build social responsibility.

Carter's own attitudes toward what an editor should be and should do had crystallized before the Commission issued the report. They will be addressed at the conclusion of the study. Examining the editorials in the light of the Commission's criteria should serve as a measure of the correlation between traditional journalistic wisdom and the norms established by social responsibility theorists.

The Editor

Born (1907) and reared in rural Hammond, Louisiana, Carter entered Bowdoin College in Maine at the age of 16. He received degrees from Bowdoin and from the Graduate School of Journalism, Columbia University (1928). He was a reporter for the New Orleans *Item-Tribune* (1929), United Press in New Orleans and the Associated Press in Jackson, Mississippi. Six months before being fired from AP for "insubordination," he and Betty Werlein of New Orleans were married (1931) — a partnership which extended into all his journalistic endeavors. The young couple founded the Hammond *Daily Courier* with $400 capital. For four Great Depression years, they published under major financial difficulty. Editorially, the *Courier* attacked the Huey Long political machine. Carter's articles on Long in the *New Republic* brought him national attention in 1934-35. In 1936, they sold the *Courier* for $16,000 and moved to Greenville, their home for the next 36 years.[9]

Greenville civic leaders had invited them to establish a newspaper in competition with the humdrum *Daily Democrat-Times*. After two years of intense competition for advertising and readers, the Carter's and their associates bought out the other paper and merged it with their *Delta Star*. In 1939, Carter was named a Nieman Fellow at Harvard and the next year joined the New York City daily, *PM*, as press editor.

In November (1940), his National Guard division (31st) was called to active duty. He edited the Middle East editions of *Stars and Stripes* and *Yank* and came home to Greenville in 1945 a major. The *Delta Democrat-Times* won the Pulitzer Prize the next year for 11 editorials, most of which condemned racial bigotry. Singled out by the jury was an editorial contrasting Nisei soldiers' performance in the war to the repressive internment of Nisei civilians at home. Carter had written two books during his military service, and articles by him appeared regularly in the national magazines.

Carter went from infancy to college in 16 years, to daily newspaper publisher in the next 16 and to nationally-known Pulitzer Prize winner in the next 16. He had survived and thrived on economic and journalistic vicissitudes. He had an intimate knowledge of his own region and substantial experience nationally and internationally.

The Environment

During the first half of this century, the South had an economy substantially rural and based on one crop, cotton.[10] Its politics was one-party, almost entirely conservative Democrat, centered around the whites-only party primary, the good-old-boy network at the courthouse and state house and on maximum-seniority incumbents in Congress.[11] The region comprised a unique American society composed of whites and blacks segregated from one another by law and custom.[12] The interrelationships of these characteristics have been described and analyzed for almost a century beginning with Henry Grady's *The New South* (1890) and including W.J. Cash's *The Mind of the South.*[13]

Except for the old plantations around Natchez, Mississippi was only a generation from frontier status when the Civil War disrupted the economy. It had little time to adopt the gentility of the Old South and remained a raw land in many ways through Reconstruction. At the middle of this century, among the 48 states, Mississippi was the most rural, had the most blacks and the lowest per capita income — $1,162, slightly more than $1,000 below the national figure.[14]

Only a decade before the Civil War did the development of the Delta, the northwestern portion of Mississippi, begin. This alluvial plain stretches 200 miles from Memphis to Vicksburg along the Mississippi River. Sixty-miles-wide overflows of the mighty river, which had deposited rich silt to form the Delta, also prevented its settlement until drainage and flood control efforts by local interests began in 1850.[15] Greenville is its largest town (30,000 at mid-century), located halfway down its western edge on the river.

The Delta was a unique section, then, in the nation's poorest state. More than half its population (and Greenville's) was black, the densest per capita in the nation. These blacks were denied the vote by a poll tax and a subjective literacy test that involved interpreting a section (chosen by the county clerk) of the state constitution. So the Delta was weak electoraliy because half its population was ineligible to vote.[16]

But the potential for wealth (and power) lay in its rich, easily tilled soil. If malaria didn't weaken or kill the farmers, if the river didn't flood and if the boll weevil didn't eat up the crop, a bale to the acre and more of cotton could be raised. That was white gold — if the price didn't plummet. It often did.

A few wise and fortunate planters made fortunes that lasted more than a generation or two. They and a merchant and professional class in Greenville and other parts of the Delta traveled, sent their children to distant universities and formed a leadership group that did things such as invite editor Carter and his wife to move to Greenville.[17]

Then during the first half of the century, the people of the Delta saw

the "ifs" separating them from prosperity fall away. Yellow fever and malaria gave way to screens on the windows. The great Mississippi River flood of 1927 brought the federal government into action to provide the levees and bank stabilization that gave the Delta security for farming — and for the construction of industrial plants. The Depression, which brought the government into stabilization of farm crops and prices, did not deal Greenville and environs the devastating blow that most of the South received. All the business activity relating to levee construction was at its height, and at the end of the 1930s, Greenville leadership found the funds to build a highway bridge across the Mississippi River, opening their businesses to the people of northeast Louisiana and southeast Arkansas.[18]

World War II brought to Greenville a military pilot training base which remained in operation into the 1960s. At the end of the war, enterprising rivermen bought surplus submarine diesel engines and established a towboat-building and towing industry on the Greenville riverfront. Alexander Smith Inc. moved its principal manufacturing operation and company headquarters from Yonkers, New York, into a plant covering 15 acres, financed by state-supported bonds, at Greenville.[19] A satellite plant that produced jute backing for the axminster carpets produced by Alexander Smith was established at nearby Indianola, where the White Citizens Councils were born just a few years later.

A century of frustrated dreams seemed to be coming true. No more disease. No more floods — in fact, a river turned into a reliable highway for world commerce. No more boll weevil as wartime chemicals such as dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) came home. (The *Delta Democrat-Times* soon thereafter picked up the nickname *DD-T.*)[20] No more hand labor, as flame cultivation and mechanical pickers increased the need for capable tractor drivers and mechanics. No more one-crop economy as industries moved in. It seemed fitting to many, as schools to educate the bumper crop of war babies were built, to provide decently for the blacks who were moving to town in such great numbers.[21]

The economic aspirations of the South, of Mississippi and of the Delta now were based on interdependence with the commerce of the rest of the nation and the world. Greenville towing companies floated fuel oil from Texas to Pittsburgh and new cars from Indiana to Louisiana.[22] Greenville Mills imported the wool for its carpets from Australia. Cotton plantations were becoming agribusinesses based on tractors, chemicals, botanical genetics and government programs rather then mules, illiterate laborers and the London cotton market.

The leadership was caught up in this change and the *DD-T* was its champion. In 1982 Betty Carter recalled that its editorials were not predominantly about civil rights matters. "We weren't a one-issue newspaper," she said. The paper encouraged economic development of

the region accompanied by the improvement in public services. "We did things then (regarding industrial development particularly) that we probably wouldn't do now," she said. "We needed jobs for the people in our town."

The economic changes outpaced social and political change. The move toward diversity, development and interdependence did not diminish racial segregation in the South and particularly in Mississippi. Law and custom dictated segregated sections in public transportation and theaters, separate restaurants, drinking fountains and rest rooms and separate schools.

Political candidates competed for the votes of whites by promising to be the strongest champions of segregation. Moderates, such as Carter, were favorite targets for their incentive.[27]

Segregation in the Delta and Mississippi at mid-Twentieth Century was not withering away. Prosperity meant that the white power structure was willing to spend money to preserve segregation. No main-line newspapers in Mississippi, Alabama and elsewhere in the Deep South were espousing desegregation. To be a moderate on segregation was to be radical in the South.

The Supreme Court's desegregation decision caught the South and particularly Mississippi in an awkward socio-economic stance. The economic leg was stretching toward interdependence and diversity, while the societal leg was planted firmly in the segregation laws and customs of the past. The decision was sensitizing Americans to long-suppressed aspirations and apprehensions. Powerful national forces, epitomized by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, demanded "now." Powerful Southern forces, epitomized by the White Citizens Councils, replied "never."

Early Reaction

On May 17, 1954, the *DD-T* reported the decision written by Chief Justice Earl Warren under a banner headline and, on the next day, commented editorially:

> The Supreme Court's decision that segregated schools are unconstitutional was expected by almost everyone . . .More significant than surprising, too, was the unanimous nature of the decision. The justices who made it are men from every section of the nation, men of varied social backgrounds and beliefs and political outlook. That they should be so united in this case can be interpreted only as meaning they were completely convinced that morality and the democratic tradition were on their side.
>
> What is important to find out is where do we go from here? . . . If the thousands of other school districts in the South continue to bar Negro students from white schools — as is likely — they can be forced to change their policies only by further court action in each instance. That means a long delay in most areas of the South....
>
> It seems to us that it is the height of folly to think now or even later of doing away

with the public school system in the South as a means of evading the decision. If the Court's intent is to be evaded — as it undoubtedly will be for a long time to come in most Southern states — it is not necessary to destroy the public school system. Mississippi's plan of assigning students to a certain center offers one way out. There are others....

If ever a region asked for such a decision, the South did through its shocking, calculated and cynical disobedience to its own state constitutions which specify that separate school systems must be equal. For seventy-five years we sent Negro kids to school in hovels and pig pens.... And if we are to effect a workable and fair compromise at the local Southern levels we have to spend dollar for dollar all down the line, for every educable child.... Most Negroes want only the same opportunities for their children as we white people want for ours. They want fair play....

Let's keep our shirts on. The decision has been made. It is a momentous one. Whatever the South thinks of it, there is no doubt that it will raise American prestige in the world, and especially in the world of brown and yellow and black peoples. And to us in the South, it gives a challenge to replace trickery and subterfuge in our educational structure with an honest realization that every American child has the right to an equal education....

Within four months of the decision, *DD-T* editorials had dealt with three aspects of the issue. First was the over-riding need for calm, an appeal made again and again:

. . .Throughout the Delta region of Mississippi there has been calm acceptance of the decision, coupled with a determination to work things out.... Every responsible individual with whom we have talked about the matter is using his good sense and refused to be stampeded into making damn fool remarks....[24]

The second theme was the threat that ambitious politicians would sensationalize the issue to further their careers:

Herman Talmadge has been making some absurd statements over in Georgia about the new Supreme Court ruling on segregation. He said he would use the Georgia National Guard if necessary to resist the court's ruling.

What Talmadge is doing only gives new resolution to those who are prepared to believe the worst about the South. His intemperate utterances are calculated to cause distrust and worse. He is furnishing no real solution to a problem which must find a compromise. About all that is left to Talmadge is to have Georgia withdraw from the Union and that went out of fashion several decades ago....[25]

The third theme was the impracticality of immediately attempting to desegregate schools in rural areas of heavy black population:

. . . In the non-Southern states, the Negro population is concentrated in the larger cities. Most Negroes in these cities live in concentrated areas such as New York's Harlem and Chicago's South Side.

This is not true in Mississippi. Although the Negro population continues to fall off in relation to white, 45 Mississippians in 100 are Negroes. In Washington County, 70 persons in 100 are Negro, and in Greenville 50 persons in 100 are Negro. They are not concentrated as in so many Northern cities, but are scattered through town and countryside. If only one person in ten in Mississippi were Negro, as in the nation at large, our race relations would be different. The pressure of numbers is still the important human truth in the relationships of different racial and religious groups....

Let us first repeat our previously stated belief that the court could not have made a

different decision in the light of democratic and Christian principles and against the world background of today . . . In this we probably differ from many of our fellow Southerners.

But we do not differ with them in our conviction that it would be tragic if in the deep South any widespread or concerted effort is made this fall or in the immediate future to enroll Negro children in hitherto all-white schools. It would be especially tragic in the Delta, including our own county and city, where the two races have set a fine example of understanding and progress — even though that progress has not been as fast and complete as some of us would like. The farce of national and state prohibition should be proof enough that if a federal law or policy is not acceptable to a majority or to a dominant and organized minority it is not obeyed....

A majority of Southerners are not ready for the reality of integration at the public school level. A vast majority of white Mississippians are not ready for it. They were ready and more than ready to make amends for old injustices to the Negro....

Time is a great healer. Time has been on the side of the Negro in his journey from the slave ship to the ballot box and the nation's council chambers. But the Negro is not powerful enough, numerically or economically or culturally, to make time a hasty weapon. Time can also turn back upon itself, and in so doing it can topple much of what we in the South have built together. H.C.[24]

Mississippi Responses

The emergence of the White Citizens Councils in September coincided with covert efforts to discredit desegregationists at large and to intimidate Mississippi whites into unanimous support of radical opposition to desegregation. At the same time, the voters had before them the first post-decision action by the Mississippi Legislature, a constitutional amendment permitting the Legislature to abolish the schools.

Editorials deplored secrecy, guilt by association and the appeal to hatred. Carter enlisted his personal record and the newspaper's in defense of moderation. And to sway those who did not like him, he increasingly quoted the views of other important Mississippians and Southerners.

After reporting the existence of the White Citizens Councils, the newspaper commented in an editorial entitled, "It's Time to Come Out":

For months there has been talk behind closed doors and veiled remarks at open meetings about groups of citizens organizing to insure that our schools remain segregated.

It is no secret that the majority of the white people prefer that the schools remain segregated while at the same time hoping to bring Negro schools not already up to standard into an equal position with the white schools. There is, conversely, no secret about the NAACP. We know their aim and we know their methods. If there is some group formed to frustrate those aims, as is reported, it should come out into the open and say so.

The United Press Jackson staff writer, John Herbers, said in his Sunday column that groups of "vigilantes" were forming throughout the Delta. That report has been made also in the editorial columns of the *Mississippi Pilot* (a short-lived Greenville weekly newspaper), although in perhaps a more hysterical manner suggesting that the Ku Klux Klan was ready to ride again. The *Pilot* was answered in turn by the Jackson *Daily News*, which darkly suggested that there were methods beyond the law which would insure that Mississippi schools remain segregated.

"Has it never occurred to you that something extracurricular in the way of law en-

forcement may become necessary in the event we are forced to deal with the vicious PAC of the CIO and the equally vicious NAACP?" Major Fred Sullens asked.

We pray that neither the phantom terrorists feared by the *Pilot's* editor, Hal Decell, nor the "extracurricular vigilantes" praised by the *News'* Sullens exists in the way either editor described them.

If this is true, then the only unrespectable aspect of the organizations is their secrecy.

The trouble with secrecy, especially in this case where there is no secret — but only a partial secret — is that it lends itself to fanciful speculation. If the groups do not come out into the open to have their say and be counted now, they may be thoroughly discredited in advance by people who misinterpret what they do and misrepresent what they say....[37]

Hate material circulated and later repudiated by a Citizens Councils executive brought these responses.

It is reassuring to note that R.B. Patterson, executive secretary of the Citizens Councils, has reconsidered his former enthusiastic endorsement of as obscene and hate-minded a batch of anti-Semitic publications as ever polluted the mails....

We have a copy of it, dated August 24. We are told that it was not sent to the few Jewish members of the Citizens Council, but apparently a copy went to just about everybody else. We are curious as to who persuaded Patterson to send out this generally outrageous list of publications, many of which have been denounced by the American Legion, among other organizations. Perhaps he persuaded himself and is now sorry. Perhaps he accepted the suggestion of others that these rotten pamphlets be recommended, without knowing what he was being asked to do.

If Patterson knew on August 24 what he was telling Citizens Council members to read, then he was as anti-Semitic and anti-democratic as anyone can get. If he didn't know, then he was guilty of the greatest kind of carelessness in letting himself be bamboozled or influenced into recommending what was for the most part shockingly un-American material. If he still doesn't know what a majority of these publications are about, we'd be glad to tell him. We have the case histories of their authors, together with samples of what they write and think and lie about Jews. Hitler's propagandists could have learned a lot from them. We hope the Councils don't....[38]

A month later an editorial returned to that theme:

. . . So, with most native white citizens agreed upon the fact that there is a problem and that we are opposed to abandoning segregated schools, we do not see where it is necessary to go further and to stir up racial distrust and hatred with a lot of misinformation.

There is no need for Southerners to support their point of view with poisonous fallacies, especially those that are spewn out by professional racists.

The preaching of the theory of a "white super-race" will not teach the Negro pride in his own race, and that race pride is a great barrier to racial intermixture.

Hitler and Stalin tried to rewrite history to support their own favorite theories. The integrity of America's intellectual freedom demands that we seek the truth rather than to fashion facts to fit the prejudice of even a majority.

The only logical way to permanently assure a continued peaceful co-existence of the races in the South, is to assure that each race has equal opportunities for education, occupation and for the development of a pride in his own people....[39]

Recognizing that the voters would approve the school-closing amendment, the newspaper nevertheless opposed it:

Some day, curious and shocked Americans will ask history and each other who

were these angry and fearful people who reacted so unwisely to a doubtful threat as to be willing to relinquish to politicians the decision as to whether their hard-gained public school systems would endure or die. We do not want to be counted, by default or otherwise, among our suicidal fellows.

The arguments in support of this amendment are, to us, phony. Let Mississippi show the world, say its supporters, that its white citizens oppose integration of the public schools. Let us be constitutional, they add, piously pointing out that the state's statutes on separate educational systems contradict the Supreme Court's edict.... And they say, in arrogant climax, that (1) no school funds will be made available unless the amendment is passed; and that (2) those who oppose the amendment must be counted among the supporters of racially integrated public schools.

Those arguments are childishly easy to answer....

Can any honest person believe that the rest of the nation does not know how Mississippi feels? Have we not persistently placed in office and unveiled statues to even the most blatant of our spokesmen for racial separateness? Do we not live in an almost constant condition of rebellion and protest against the federal government's activities in the field of civil rights? . . .

Truly we didn't expect that even the most callous of our politicians would be so cynical or so humorless as to place themselves and the rest of us in the role of constitutional saviors. It is doubtful that any other Americans have so zealously and successfully or for so long a time devoted themselves to getting around constitutions — the nation's and our own — as have Mississippians. From state prohibition to the Bill of Rights to the principle of equal but separate schools, our adherance has consisted of observing such parts of these constitutions as we approve and violating the rest....

We've never run with the pack, and we've never run from it. A recent Citizens Council handbill lists in one column just about every political leader in Mississippi and a good many people who are afraid of politicians, as being supporters of the amendment. In a second column it lists as opponents a small and select handful of people and groups, among them the editors of the McComb *Enterprise* and this newspaper, a couple of independent minded legislators, one or two private citizens and then, in an appeal to anti-labor and anti-Negro feeling, the CIO, the AFofL and the NAACP.

Right here we'd like to put the Citizens Councils straight. Sometimes we have been convinced by reasonable people that we have been wrong in taking certain positions. In such cases we've admitted it. But the handbill's use of the technique of guilt by association is no way of persuading us of error. We would not stoop to calling Robert Patterson a Communist just because he and the Communist party both want to see this divisive amendment passed. But that's the kind of thing he is doing to decent people who don't agree with him.

We've been battling the NAACP's own angry racism for a long time. We'll battle Patterson's identical brand of hatred of dissimilar people just as hard. We won't charge anyone five bucks a throw to go along with us. And we brand as a contemptible liar any one, in or out of any Kouncil, Klan or Kookoo Konvocation who says or intimates that Editor Oliver Emmerich of McComb, Representative Joe Wroten of Greenville, the editor of this newspaper or any other loyal citizen who opposes this amendment is an enemy of this state, or this nation or of democracy. We happen not to believe it necessary to authorize the abolition of the public school system in order to keep school children in separate public schools in Mississippi. That's all there is to it. Period.

As we said before, this is just for the record. The amendment will almost certainly carry. As for us, to borrow a line from a near-immortal cartoon, we say it's spinach and we say to hell with it.[30]

After the amendment received voter approval, another editorial noted that the voters from some parts of the state had been opposed to it.

. . . The Mississippi Council for Christian Social Action, which opposed the constitutional amendment to allow the abolition of public schools, gives the indication of how badly this issue has split our state.

> And again, it's the Hills versus the Delta, after all that has been done to heal the old breach and the almost hereditary grievances. . . . The amendment passed only because of enormous returns, as high as 25 to 1, from Delta and other black counties. The vote against the amendment of Pearl River, Bilbo's home county, is the answer to those who sought to smear and insult opponents of the scheme, who were accused of opposing segregated schools.
>
> The (CCSA) further observes that "the solid northeast, the whitest section of the state, rejected the amendment, as did the southeast, the second whitest part of the state...."
>
> Thus threats and bitterness again sharpen on the Mississippi political scene. We can only hope and pray that the Legislature does not come to the point of moving to act by the law of the school abolition amendment. That would truly divide our state, possibly for good.[11]

The Conflict Broadens

In the first eight months of 1955 editorials examined the federal implementation of desegregation and spinoff issues related to the struggle. These related matters included the closing of Greenville-area voter rolls and the screening of speakers at state colleges and universities.

The Supreme Court heard federal, state and pro-desegregation implementation proposals. An editorial published April 15 repeated the advice of the previous year to Mississippians: "Let's keep our shirts on." After the hearings, the newspaper summarized them and commented:

> The South's spokemen want indefinite postponement or what would be actual abandonment of the idea of public school integration. . . .The NAACP wants integration to begin this fall or next fall everywhere in the South. And the Administration, though firm in its stand for integrated schools, tempers its position somewhat by its apparent willingness for a gradual approach.
>
> What course the Supreme Court will adopt no one can now tell. But it is safe to prophesy that compliance with its instructions will vary in the South according to the density of Negro population in the various Southern states and within the counties of those states. Border states, and areas with large white majorities will in time probably go along with the Administration's proposals. The heavily Negro populated states will not. There will be token integration for a long, long time. Residential patterns, redistricting, the building of new schools, will all serve to cushion whatever change lies ahead.
>
> Meanwhile the shift of the Negro population in the South, and away from the South will be a factor, whose importance to eventual adjustment cannot be underestimated.[12]

The desegregation issue now dominated the public mind in Mississippi. Public bodies began to act in all sorts of ways to defend white-dominated segregation. In an example close to home, the Washington County Board of Supervisors ordered the county clerk to stop registering voters, because a constitutional amendment tightening requirements and aimed at restricting registration of blacks was certain to be passed soon, bringing these editorial comments on January 31:

> . . . The Supervisors may not, according to the plain and simple words of the Mississippi Code, close up those books as they please, just because registering seems to have "caused more confusion than clarification." That was the feeble excuse given

> in the order drawn up by Hilton Waits, attorney for the Board. Mr. Waits is a member of the Mississippi Legislature. Surely he knows better than this.
>
> With their right to challenge the rolls or the qualifications of any name thereon, why should the Board members take the precaution to stop everyone from registering? They may reply: "to avoid all that paperwork, to keep the rolls from being confused, and so forth." The real reason must be, "to keep off names of people who won't be qualified by the new voter qualification law." They would not give some citizens the opportunity to have their names challenged in the book, because the book is closed....

After labeling the move illegal, the editorial concluded by saying, "it's nothing short of tyranny."

Two months later the Mississippi House of Represenatives reacted to a *Look* magazine article by Carter on the South's resistance to desegregation. By a vote of 89-19 the House passed a resolution branding him a liar. In a signed, front-page editorial of April 3 that has been quoted frequently and was typical of his brand of personal journalism, he wrote:

> . . . I herewith resolve by a vote of 1 to 0 that there are 89 liars in the State Legislature.... Those 89 character mobbers can go to hell, collectively or singly, and wait till I back down. They needn't plan on returning.

In a further reaction to dissident expression, the power structure took issue with a pacifist speech delivered on the campus of Mississippi Southern College (now University of Southern Mississippi). An editorial on February 27 compared the statement of Voltaire "that he might disagree with what someone said, but would defend to the death his right to say it" to a state senator's contribution to the debate on a resolution to screen speakers: "let's don't tolerate no such stuff being taught in the schools of this state." A second editorial took to task Dr. E.R. Jobe, executive secretary of the State College Board, for claiming that the Board had no plans to "screen" speakers.

> . . . "Nobody's freedom is going to be suppressed," Jobe said. "But the people of Mississippi have the right to expect college presidents to be careful of the type of speakers they permit to appear at their institutions."
>
> All this double-talk means one thing: while disliking the word "screening," the Board intends to screen speakers. And "being careful of the type of speakers selected" means to not pick any who might broach some controversial topic from an angle that differs from the prevailing Neanderthal attitude of the Legislature."

Violence and Coercion

In August, Emmett Till, a 14-year-old Chicago black, allegedly made a remark or whistled at a white woman working in a Mississippi Delta plantation store. He was taken at night from his uncle's rural cabin by the woman's husband and his half-brother. Young Till's body was found in the Tallahatchie River. The two men were charged with murder. The newspaper condemned the slaying, urged a thorough investigation and on

September 2 implored civil rights groups to cease sensationalizing the case: "To blame more than two million Mississippians for the irresponsible act of three is about as illogical as one can become."

Under a headline "Lynching Post-Facto" on September 6 the editor said:

> It is becoming sickeningly obvious that two groups of people are seeking an acquittal for the two men charged with kidnapping and of brutally murdering afflicted 14-year-old Emmett Till, a Negro youth accused of "wolf whistling" at a white woman.
>
> Those two groups are the NAACP which is seeking another excuse to apply the torch of worldwide scorn to Mississippi and the friends of the two white men. Among the latter apparently can be counted Sheriff H.C. Strider.
>
> All the macabre exhibitionism, the wild statements and hysterical overtones at the Chicago funeral of the Till child seem too well staged not to have been premeditated with the express purpose of (1) inflaming hatreds and (2) trying to set off a reaction in reverse in Mississippi, where there had previously been honest indignation....
>
> Working hand in hand with this devious intent, however unwittingly, are some officials who are handling the case. Upon their shoulders may rest the honor of Mississippi's courts.
>
> Whoever heard of a sheriff offering on the flimsiest construction of fact the perfect piece of evidence for the defense? Without a *corpus delecti*, there can be no murder conviction — of anyone. We would not say, for we do not know, who specifically is guilty of this murder. But we would say that the information that the body was that of Emmett Till was accurate enough....
>
> Sheriff Strider bases his supposition mainly on the fact that the body, after being shot, beaten and soaked in the muddy river for several days did not resemble a picture taken some while ago, which appeared in a Jackson newspaper, and that it appeared to have been in the river a longer time. This defies the fact that the body was identified by relatives, was accepted by the boy's mother. It defies also the evidence of the ring.
>
> Had such a murder been planned to replace another body for Till's, someone would have had to have been killed before the boy was abducted, the ring engraved LT (for the boy's father, Louis Till) stolen from young Till, and placed on the dead person's finger. Without the prior knowledge that Roy Bryant and his half-brother would kidnap young Till, as they admittedly did, such a conspiracy defies even the most fantastic reality....
>
> They are calling this a lynching in some places outside of Mississippi. Well, it wasn't. But it may well become a lynching *post-facto* if the courts of Mississippi are unable to accomplish justice in this matter. And if this happens, we will deserve the criticism we get.

When the defendants were acquitted, an editorial on September 25 noted that the jury could hardly have found otherwise because, "the criticism (must) fall upon the law officials who attempted in such small measure to seek out evidence and to locate witnesses," and upon the NAACP spokesmen "for without their blanket accusations of decent people, their studied needling of the citizens who had to decide a matter of local justice, and the indifference to truth in favor of propaganda making, those local officials put on the defensive from the outset might otherwise have made an honest effort to do more...."

The *DD-T* soon was commenting on another civil rights confrontation. In Holmes County, southeast of Greenville, the white manager of a cooperative farm owned in part by blacks and a white doctor who ran a

clinic there were brought before a meeting of 700 to 1,000 whites. An editorial, "Memo to Some Holmes Countians," on September 30 characterized the meeting as follows:

> This is just a reminder that Mississippi, including Holmes County, is still in the United States.
>
> A number of Holmes Countians -- reportedly 700 to 1,000 strong -- don't seem to know it. They are reported to have attempted to "persuade" two citizens to leave the county because their ideas on race relations don't jibe with the majority's.
>
> One thousand to two. It's a nice, safe ratio, and one-sided enough to scare most people.
>
> So far, the two men . . . haven't left. We admire their guts. And we are sure that they have been victims of false witness, given by frightened Negroes.
>
> But, we repeat, this is the United States. Those men are entitled to a basic American right. It is the right to disagree with any other American, openly and in security. To intimidate or punish anyone, whatever his opinions, his religion, his color or his lawful politics, is as un-American as any bestial idea that ever came from behind the Iron Curtain.... There are legal and moral forces in our land more potent than any thousand to two line-up anywhere. Before this madness can end, those forces must and will be felt.

A Greenville Citizens Council

It was late summer 1954 when the first White Citizens Council was organized at Indianola, Mississippi, just 25 miles east of Greenville. On April 7, 1955, a *DD-T* editorial took note of efforts to organize in Greenville:

> If the Citizens Councils are so all-fired noble, we'd like these questions answered:
>
> 1. Why has one reputable Greenville citizen after another declined local leadership?
>
> 2. Why are organizational efforts in Greenville being made by outsiders, at least one of whom is motivated by political ambitions?
>
> 3. Why are such efforts being made in secrecy or semi-secrecy?
>
> 4. Why are Greenville and the Delta being flooded by the rankest kind of hate and fear literature?
>
> 5. Why does an organization reputed to be 30,000 strong continue to single out one individual target?
>
> 6. What are they scared of?

Then on October 2, organization of the Greenville Council was commented on. Noting that the Council could do no more legally than was already being done to preserve segregated schools and that everyone in and outside of Mississippi already knew that "among the white citizenry there is no support for integrated schools," the editorial further questioned the rationale for the Greenville Council's existence:

> In these tense and troubled times every effort to promote harmony among the various groups in the population should be encouraged. Every activity which leads to disharmony should be opposed. No one can believe that such organizations create friendships. The history of the movement to organize the Greenville Council proves that. A considerable number of Greenville citizens who attended the early secret

meetings months ago, at which formation of a Council was urged, were outspoken in their opposition. These opponents were gradually weeded out, so that only a like-minded residue remained. Certainly a list could be drawn up of citizens opposed to the Council which would be at least as long and imposing as is the Council's roster of leaders....

Finally, we are curious about the extent to which the Greenville Council's purposes coincide with the announced objectives of other Councils elsewhere in the state. The Greenville group's president has said that its only intent is to maintain segregation in the schools and in other public facilities. But the Council's state headquarters has from time to time declared that in addition to opposing integration, it seeks to eliminate the Negro voter in Mississippi, to screen and get behind chosen political candidates, and to use economic, political and social pressure against its critics as well as against the Negro. The mass meeting in Holmes County last week at which two citizens were "requested" to leave the county, was called by the president of the county's Council. During the past election, the scalps of at least six legislators were sought by Councils.... The efforts to boycott this and some other newspapers in the state were led by Council members.

It is to be hoped — and we believe — that the Greenville Council will not go along with such purposes as these. If it does, God help this town and its people, in and out of the Council, for our long-cherished unity will be a thing of the past.

Epilogue

Within 20 months of the desegregation decision, the *DD-T's* editorial policies and the principal issues on civil rights that they addressed for the next decade were established. Opposition to radical groups and action was the continuing theme, with the counterpoint that, if given time, people of good will could reach social accommodation beneficial to all.

This point of view contrasted with the editorial stands of the largest newspapers in the state — the Jackson *Clarion Ledger* and *Daily News* — both of which were active supporters of massive resistance, as were a number of smaller papers. It also contrasted with editorial stances of many other Mississippi papers which deplored the threat to the status quo, the imposition of integration by outside forces and the like, but took a generally hands-off attitude on the issue.

A few Mississippi editors joined Carter in addressing inevitable change. Carter cited the stands of his friend Oliver Emmerich of the McComb *Enterprise Journal* from time to time. The race relations editorials of two other editors received the 1963 and 1964 Pulitzer Prizes. They were Ira B. Harkey Jr. (Pascagoula *Chronicle*) and Hazel Brannon Smith (Lexington *Advertiser*), the first woman so honored.

The experience of P.D. East and *The Petal Paper* is noteworthy because East challenged the status quo directly. Most notable was a satirical full-page "advertisement" promising readers that a $5 enrollment fee, admitting them to membership in the White Citizens Council, would make them "Super Superior." East soon lost all his advertising and all but three of his subscribers in the town of Petal. Eventually he lost his newspaper.[34]

The *DD-T* was less strident. "Let's keep our shirts on," Carter urged

his readers, a remarkably passive theme for an editor labeled "courageous." The classical expression of this policy dates from 421 B.C. and Euripedes: "Discretion is valor. A daring pilot is dangerous to a ship." Carter and others correctly predicted that the initial desegregation of public schools would come elsewhere. It was Carter who realized that this gave his community and the Delta the opportunity to adjust to the new realities, and that political and social upheaval (almost certainly violence) would accompany hasty action.

Reining in the ardent segregationists and providing a local counterpoint to the "massive resistance" chants of Mississippi politicians and press was no mean accomplishment.

In retrospect the course espoused by the newspaper, by and large, was the course of desegregation in Mississippi. Although violence accompanied the first desegregation of educational facilities (at the University of Mississippi in 1962) and there was violence during the civil rights campaign to register Negro voters, the public school campuses went relatively unscathed. Carter and other prominent Mississippians had predicted a decade-long hiatus between the decision and its implementation in the state.[35] Shortly before the end of the predicted time, public schools and other public accommodations were being desegregated across the state. Desegregation was accompanied by rapid growth of private schools, so that Mississippi had joined the rest of the nation: discrimination is now unofficial.

The subject of vilification across Mississippi during the 1950s and into the 1960s, Carter was honored in later years as an "Outstanding Mississippian" by the Mississippi Economic Council, a statewide chamber of commerce. His personal papers were placed in the special collections of the library of Mississippi State University. The *DD-T*, which suffered some loss of circulation and advertising during the intense confrontation with the White Citizens Councils, continued to prosper under the direction of Hodding and Betty Carter and their co-owner and general manager, John T. Gibson, with their eldest son, Hodding Carter III, becoming managing editor. After Carter's death in 1972, Betty Carter became publisher and Hodding III became editor; later, the second son, Philip, assumed the editorship. The family sold the newspaper in 1980.

Analysis of the Editorials

Did the *DD-T* meet the criteria of responsibility? Before the question is addressed directly, an analysis is needed as to why the newspaper's editorial voice spoke louder than would be expected from a medium with 14,000 subscribers in four or five rural counties. The concept of positioning explains this phenomenon.

Positioning is a term used in marketing and advertising.[36] It has to do

with determining how a product or sevice will be offered in relation to similar products or services — to whom, when and in what package. It also concerns how the product or service will be publicized — through what media and by what messages.

The *DD-T* addressed the desegregation question from the most segregated state and from the area where blacks outnumbered whites by the greatest margin. Editorials on the issue coming from Greenville, Mississippi, could not be considered idle words.

The newspaper was an established voice, an often controversial voice, particulary in Mississippi and outside of Greenville. It had a record of speaking on all kinds of issues, and there was a tendency for politicians and other journalists to react to what it said.

Along with William Faulkner and perhaps Senator James O. Eastland, Carter was the best known Mississippian outside the state. By Mississippians, he probably was taken more seriously than Faulkner. His byline appeared in the magazines they read, and stories of speeches he made in distant places appeared in all the newspapers. They knew he was listened to afar, and they came to look for his response to events at home.

He was well established in Greenville, a successful businessman who had paid his civic dues in every sort of community project and who was well-liked at the Yacht Club, the Elks Club, the Country Club and St. James Episcopal Church.

The editorials were written in the rhetoric of the South. Carter's *macho* personality came through like a Rebel yell. They were not coldly impersonal as the vast majority of editorials were then and are now. The comments were not the slick analysis that the news magazines provided, nor boorish as were many of the segregationist writings in Mississippi. There is an intimate intensity to them typical of the never-ending arguments within an extended family in the South.

Carter and the *DD-T* lived and argued as members of the extended family that was the Delta and Mississippi in the 1950s.

Criteria

1. A truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning.

Positioning of the newspaper provided its editor with insight into the context of the issue. Seeing and feeling in his community the pressure of black numbers as well as the desire for continued economic growth and development, also aware of the inevitability of eventual desegregation, Carter wrote his "keep our shirts on" editorial and stuck to that policy. The editor presented the realities of a unanimous court, of the United States under scrutiny by the emerging nations, of the hypocrisy of inadequate schools for blacks, of the aspirations of black parents for their

children and of the opportunity to move with deliberation rather than haste.

Later he could cite the difference in housing patterns, political weakness of Mississippi blacks and the militant social heritage of Mississippi whites as the context for deliberate rather than hasty consideration of desegregation. Turning to the other extreme, his editorials could put the hysterical over-reaction of the public school abolition amendment into context and in the case of the Emmett Till editorial, he could contrast the propaganda making in Chicago with the hypocrisy of the Tallahatchie County sheriff. Repeatedly he could refer to the too-slow but nevertheless real progress toward social and economic betterment of all. Reasoned consideration of these matters could lead to a satisfactory accommodation. That was the context of the issue in Mississippi which Carter defined.

2. A forum for the exchange of comment and criticism.

Discussion of the desegregation issue by the media often resembled a shouting match. The national media tended to portray the issue as one of the white South arrayed against determined black organizations, with the American majority passively backing the latter. The predominant media in Mississippi portrayed the issue as an evil attempt of outside forces to disrupt an honorable culture. This was no dialogue or exchange of comment. The crisis-oriented coverage of the national media and the near-paranoid reaction in some of the Southern media, considered together, constituted an almost schizophrenic exchange.

Because they issued from the rural South and spoke in the Southern rhetoric, but with insight into the national viewpoint, the *DD-T's* editorials served as a catalyst, providing the kind of forum that could elicit responses from both sides. When Governor Talmadge threatened to use the Georgia National Guard to maintain segregation, an editorial noted the failure of armed confrontation a century earlier and the likelihood that such action would have adverse effects on Georgia's future.

Closer to home, the school abolition amendment referendum was accompanied by severe Citizens Councils and state government pressure for conformity; an editorial broke this lock-step approach by scrutinizing the proponents' arguments. The State College Board's "double talk" regarding academic freedom and the screening of speakers likewise was challenged and brought into the arena of public discussion.

The *DD-T's* editorials were strongly worded but they addressed the issues on the terms laid down by the antagonists, as well as relating the arguments already raised to other facts or views that were pertinent. The editorials represented an effort to compare and evaluate rather than simply to glorify or vilify.

3. A means of projecting the opinions and attitudes of the groups in the

society to one another.

"Most Negroes want only the same opportunities for their children as we white people want for ours...." wrote Carter, along with "they (the justices) were completely convinced that morality and the democratic tradition were on their side" on the day after the decision. He could compare three extreme positions on the organization of the White Citizens Councils and then get to the kernel of the problem — their semi-secrecy. Following the school abolition amendment referendum he used electoral and demographic data to show that white portions of Mississippi were less segregationist than portions where blacks (who couldn't vote) were in the majority.

From his local and national vantage points, Carter was positioned to understand what the groups in society were about, and to comment on them. The positioning of the newspaper, coupled with the stands it took, made it and its editor something of an institution, and the institution had a lightning-rod effect. Heat and energy generated by the controversial issue often was spent on them. The editorials several times alluded to threats, anonymous circulars and the listing of the editor's name with others thought to be enemies of Mississippi. The legislature took official exception to one of his articles.

Wire service coverage of a new manifestation of the desegregation issue was likely to include excerpts from the *DD-T's* editorial reaction either in a brief separate story or as part of a roundup of national reaction. It was a simple matter to respond to these with a letter, a telephone call or a visit. Letters to the editor filled many columns with pro and con comment. Mississippians in particular — those who agreed and those who disagreed — wrote, called or met face to face with the editor and staff to express their views. One country club confrontation between Carter and an angry plantation owner ended in friendly arm wrestling rather than the fight that had seemed likely.

The newspaper office and Carter's home were seemingly mandatory way stations for foreign and national officials, journalists and scholars passing through Mississippi on business related to desegregation. An overnight stay at the Carter home or a bull session in the *DD-T* newsroom would give visitors an opportunity to "catch up" on what was going on in Mississippi. Through Carter and the newspaper staff, visitors gained access to knowledgeable Mississippians they would not otherwise have known about. Parties at Feliciana Farm, the Carter home at the edge of Greenville, were a mecca for moderate journalists, politicians and opinion leaders from all over the Delta and beyond. Carter and the *DD-T* were a symbol of openness in what has been called the closed society."

4. A method of presenting and clarifying the goals and values of society.

Historian James Silver titled his book *The Closed Society* in reference

to the demands for conformity in Mississippi during these years. Congressman Frank Smith recalled that after the 1954 desegregation decision, "I refused to introduce the race issue into correspondence, conversation or publicity; but almost every discussion with a constituent, whatever its initial purpose, eventually led to the Negro."[38] From her vantage point as a farm worker on a Delta plantation, Fannie Lou Hamer found that challenging the goals and values of Mississippi white society could result in a black being fined, driven from her home, abused verbally and physically and jailed.[39] Every person who lived in Mississippi in the 1950s and early 1960s felt the stress that the desegregation decision had brought to the old goals and values.

Was immediate desegregation the goal no matter the cost? Was preservation of segregation the goal, no matter the cost? Those were the questions raised by the extremists on the issue. The *DD-T's* editorials brought other goals and values into the ongoing debate. Was sacrificing public school education a satisfactory price to pay? Should the system of justice (in the Emmett Till trial) or the system of voter registration (in registration book closing) take a back seat to chauvinistic or expedient goals?

How about community cooperation: should the solidarity in seeking economic development of Greenville give way to organization of a divisive Citizens Council of dubious value? Should a thousand citizens assembled be able to evict two law-abiding citizens from their homes and livelihoods? These questions were rarely raised elsewhere in Mississippi during this time. Yet consideration of such questions held the key to accommodation. By examining the options Mississippians could begin to select and prioritize their individual goals and act accordingly.

5. A way of reaching every member of the society by the currents of information, thought and feeling which the press supplies.

The *DD-T* (circulation 14,000) was published in Greenville (population 30,000), the only daily newspaper in the surrounding four or five counties. Carter spoke to this very thin slice of society through the newspaper as conscientiously as he addressed the large portion of society through the national media.

Some Mississippi newspapers virtually ignored the issue. The *DD-T* addressed it seriously and colorfully. Almost 30 years later the editorials retain their logic, intensity and dash.

Had Carter been simply a free-lance writer, his articles and books would have lacked an authentic setting which his publisher-editor role gave him. Had he been just a courageous, small-town daily editor, his editorials at home would have lacked the impact they had. Had he not done his homework — the years of building a newspaper and a position in Greenville — the newspaper might have lacked the local credibility that allowed it to survive.

Carter had a national audience and he had a local audience. Each

bolstered the credibility of the other and allowed him to speak to society in a way no other grassroots editor has since William Allen White.

Conclusions

Within Carter's *DD-T* experience can be discerned the ingredients for responsible journalism. Carter was able to meet the criteria for responsible journalism not so much through conscious effort as by meeting the following qualifications of an effective editor: ownership of the medium, active participation as a citizen in the community, respect in the wider journalistic community and on the national scene, the ability to write lucidly and in the rhetoric of one's readers and — perhaps most important — the capacity for formulating independent views and the desire (perhaps compulsion) to express them.

John Emmerich, editor and publisher of the Greenwood *Commonwealth* just 40 miles east of Greenville, addressed some of these ingredients for excellence as an editor at a 1983 Southern Newspaper Publishers Association clinic:

> I don't want to say anything about newspaper chains because it seems to me that they usually improve the quality of the newspapers that they buy, but I think one of the unfortunate things about the rise of newspaper chains is that there are too many nameless and faceless editors whom the readers never know or recognize and can never identify with. That is opposed to older days of journalism when the newspaper editor was the most important man in town.[40]

Carter explained his criterion for being an effective editor in terms of citizenship. In a brief essay, "The Editor as Citizen," at the end of the last of his autobiographical books, he began by disassociating himself from those editors who believe the editor should "stand to one side, holding a mirror before his community, reporting what he sees in it, and, if he thinks editorial comment is required, make it from the vantage point of non-involvement." Carter went on to describe the symbiotic relationship between his town and himself thusly:

> The editor can contribute more to the community's well-being if he thinks of himself first as a citizen of his town, who by good fortune happens to be a newspaper editor in that town, rather than as a newspaper editor who happens to be a citizen, permanently or in passing, of some particular town....
>
> I have no right to be the town scold without taking part in the town's life. I could have no better defense against our critics than to prove that I am as much a citizen of Greenville as any other person who dwells there. If only as a practical matter, I could take out no surer insurance against competition than to make our newspaper the community's spokesman and its editor an active practitioner of the civic effort that the newspaper preaches. Again if only from selfish motives, I should make whatever personal contribution of time and money I can to the material welfare of Greenville. Every new citizen means a potential new subscriber. Every new job he fills means new business....
>
> But practical, material or selfish motives do not suffice. At the core of my interpretation of the editor's role lies what may be a too sentimental concept of the rela-

tionship of a man to his town. Some of us live where we live because it is a place where we can make a living. Some of us are citizens of our towns by inheritance; some because we cannot get away; some for other and assorted reasons; health, status achieved, living costs, scenery, climate and so on.... All of these reasons are understandable. None of this is bad. Not a few of them contribute to our liking where we live.

But there is another reason why we prefer Greenville above all places we know, and why, so preferring, are impelled to make its every cause our own. Nearly twenty-five years ago, Greenville accepted two young strangers from Louisiana.... Its citizens largely have stood beside us, whether in agreement or not, in these all but hysterical days of Southern trial.

This is not happenstance. Our town's personality, its spiritual expression, is an amalgam of ordeals — of trials by flood and yellow fever, by the destruction of a long-ago war, by a later struggle waged against the Ku Klux Klan, in which the good in men triumphed over the evil. Out of it all has been forged a rare community tolerance for the dissimilar and the dissenter. Out of it has also come a community compulsion to close ranks when the chips are down.... Our job on the *Delta Democrat-Times* is to respond to every challenge which bigotry, social and economic evolution and the shrill demand for conformity make to that spirit....

I would rather be a small city newspaper editor and publisher than anything I know.[41]

So wrote Hodding Carter Jr., editor and militant moderate.

NOTES

1. New York *Times*, April 5, 1972, p. 48.

2. "Ralph McGill's America and Mine," delivered at the University of Georgia, Athens, Oct. 20, 1962.

3. The author was a reporter and editor on the *Delta Democrat-Times* from January 1954 to September 1960. He wrote no editorials on race relations during the period covered by this study. Anecdotal material is included to shed light on Carter's personality and reputation and on the attributes of Greenville and the Delta area of Mississippi.

4. Carter's books ranged from juvenile history-adventure, such as *The Commandos of World War II* (New York: Random House, 1966), 152 pp., to poetry *The Ballad of Catfoot Grimes* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1964), 66 pp. Others belong on the historian's bookshelf, most notably *The Angry Scar, the Story of Reconstruction* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), 425 pp., and also *Lower Mississippi* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart Inc., 1942), 451 pp.; *Doomed Road of Empire* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), 408 pp.; and *Their Words Were Bullets* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), 78 pp. Three of his books were anecdotal-autobiographical including *Where Main Street Meets the River* (New York: Rinehart & Company Inc., 1952), *First Person Rural* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1963), 249 pp., and *Southern Legacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), 186 pp. He authored 16 books and collaborated on or contributed to five more. His magazine articles appeared over a period of 35 years in a variety of publications, most notably during the period covered by this study in *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Look*.

5. *A Free and Responsible Press* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947.)

6. References are made to the report in discussions on social responsibility in Fredrick S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson and Wilbur Schramm, *Four Theories of the Press* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956) and in Edwin Emery, Phillip H. Ault and Warren K. Agee, *Introduction to Mass Communications*, fourth edition (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1973).

7. *A Free and Responsible Press, op. cit.*, pp. 1-19.

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

9. Biographical data is drawn from *Where Main Street Meets the River, First Person Rural, Current Biography 1946* (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1947) pp. 95-97, and

from the author's files.

10. David L. Cohn, *The Life and Times of King Cotton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956) p. viii.

11. Frank E. Smith, *Congressman From Mississippi* (New York: Random House, 1964) pp. 108-126.

12. James W. Silver, *Mississippi: The Closed Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1964), pp. 83-104.

13. Cash (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941).

14. James Jackson Kilpatrick, *The Southern Case for School Segregation* (New York: Crowell-Collier Publishing Co., 1962), pp. 16-17.

15. Cohn, *Where I Was Born and Raised* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), pp. 12-42.

16. Silver, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-108, gives a scholarly description. In Howell Raines, *My Soul Is Rested* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1977), pp. 260-261. Hartman Turnbow describes the system from a black farmer's point of view.

17. William Alexander Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941). The lawyer-poet-planter of Greenville in this autobiography reveals much about the Delta's leadership.

18. Cohn, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

19. Ibid., p. 225.

20. Because it is commonly used by its readers, distinguishes the newspaper from any other and is brief, the *Delta Democrat-Times* hereafter will be referred to by the abbreviation *DD-T*.

21. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-90, succinctly states the case for economic development as the means of alleviating racial repression. In pp. 317-332 he looks to Delta leadership as the catalyst to achieve this goal.

22. Harry Marsh, "Life on a Towboat" series, *Delta Democrat-Times* of Greenville, Miss., June 16-21, 1957.

23. Cohn, *op. cit.*, p. 295.

24. *Delta Democrat-Times*, May 20, 1954, p. 4.

25. *DD-T*, May 26.

26. *DD-T*, Aug. 22, p. 1.

27. *DD-T*, Sept. 6. W. David Brown, city editor and not yet 30 years old at the time, recalled writing this editorial: "The bottom part . . . may well have been added by Hodding, though it sounds familiar, too. This often happened — Hodding expanding or adding to an editorial I began." Carter determined when editorials would appear on page 1. He sometimes appended the initials H. C. to editorials that made a particularly personal statement. Carter usually spent two months each year at his summer home in Camden, Maine, working on major writing projects. He traveled extensively on assignment. During his absences from Greenville, editorial writing became the responsibility of Brown or Tom Karsell in 1953-54 and Jay Milner 1957-59, with telephone guidance from Carter.

28. *DD-T*, Nov. 3.

29. *DD-T*, Dec. 8.

30. *DD-T*, Dec. 18.

31. *DD-T*, Jan. 4, 1955.

32. *DD-T*, April 15.

33. *DD-T*, April 22.

34. P.D. East, *The Magnolia Jungle*, (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1960), 248 pp.

35. *DD-T*, Oct. 25, 1954.

36. John S. Wright, Willis L. Winter Jr. and Sherilyn K. Ziegler, *Advertising*, 5th edition (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1982), pp. 63-66.

37. Silver, *loc. cit.*

38. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

39. Raines, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-255.

40. H.L. Stevenson, *UPI Reporter*, May 20, 1963. Emmerich is a second-generation Mississippi editor and publisher. Oliver Emmerich, his father, is mentioned in the *DD-T* editorial on the school closing amendment referendum.

41. Carter, *First Person Rural*, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-249.